Gary Proulx - EDU 702 - Spring 2010 - Reflection # 1

The ideals of social justice, collaboration, critical self-evaluation and diversity align with our course objectives and outcomes by the very nature of the course itself. Based on our initial meeting and after reading through the syllabus, it seems that we will examine all of these elements in great depth and detail. After reading the *Brooklyn College School of Education’s Conceptual Framework* I was pleasantly surprised at how familiar it all seemed and then I realized that I/we, as students, have been exposed to these ideals by our previous instructors and course content. It is vital to have such a framework as this, especially in the city so rich in diversity and culture.

Everyday when I walk into my own school, PS 13 in East New York, I am greeted by a sign in the main vestibule, above the security officer’s desk that reads simply, “Coherence.” It has become our *motto*, our *code word* amongst the staff and administration in an ongoing effort to help one another, to work as a team, and to share best practices. There’s been some division within the walls of the building and some of us, me included, are trying to rectify the situation so we can focus on our students and getting them ready for this ever changing and demanding world. In other words, we need to share what is working and fix what is not.

I’m always asking my students to work either in pairs or in groups. I ask them to work with students that they normally might not work with (on purpose) in an effort to help build relationships with one another and to **collaborate** with people that bring new experiences to their lives. That’s what we do here at Brooklyn College. Teaching can be so isolating. It is rare (and that’s an understatement) when I get an opportunity to watch a colleague of mine actually “teach.” So it can be very rewarding to work with a colleague on project for a class, but then have something that you can actually use and implement in your own classroom. I do feel that here at Brooklyn College there is a sense of community and that there is a common goal of producing amazing teachers and sending them out into our city schools armed with many tools so they can effectively teach and inspire our city’s **diverse** children.

Often my **self-reflection** comes in the form of the assessments I give to my students. If they all do poorly on a test, I take that as a sign that perhaps the way in which I taught them may not have been the most creative, inclusive, or the most inventive. I take note of this and I intentionally make adjustments the next time I teach that particular skill or unit of study. Many times I will actually go back and re-teach and then re-assess. I mean, what good is moving on to the next thing if your students haven’t a clue on how to relate to the previous topic. I’ve been teaching for a few years and ever since I’ve been in this program here at Brooklyn College, I’m forcing me to “step up” and really evaluate my lesson plans and make sure that they incorporate as much technology as possible. I don’t want to become stagnant. An effective pedagogue is one that is always learning and always re-evaluating.

I am very fortunate to have a suite of laptops and a Promethean/Smart board in my classroom. My students use **technology** at least once a day and in some instances they now show me things. For example, a student of mine was working on a Power Point presentation on the Incas and he had all the “bells and whistles.” Well, I had no idea how he incorporated some of those into his project so I was more than happy to ask him to show me. I have to say, I think that made his day.